

It appears to be a mistake to take the line on the eastern side of the lake, to open up the lesser quantity of forest-land, and leave the greater quantity upon the western side, to be hauled to the lake, and thence over it to the new line, the future prosperity of Westland being largely bound up in the way opportunities are given by the locating of this railway-line for successfully carrying out the timber industry.

The great bulk of the low and workable forest-country lies between Lake Brunner and the sea, and southerly; consequently, the deviation takes the line further away from the centre, and travels nearer the edge of the country to be opened up.

The old line would also open up granite-quarries near the mouth of the Orangapuku. In the valley of the Orangapuku there is a considerable extent of land suitable for farming, part of which I pointed out to Mr. O'Connor; and the slopes of the mountains will add considerably to the useful area of land in this valley, as they are not too steep to work, and clothed with excellent timber for a long distance up.

On the new line the land near the lake on the eastern side is low and marshy, and not attractive for settlement; and the forest-country in the lower valley of the Crooked River and Poerua River (Deep Creek) would be reasonably well served by the old line on the western side of the lake, and the land in the upper part of the Crooked River Valley and Poerua Valley would be reasonably well served by the station at the junction of the Greenstone-Lake Brunner Track with the track from the Grey Valley *via* Bell Hill, near the Teremakau. There is also a considerable area of good land for farming in the Poerua and Upper Crooked River Valleys; but the slopes of the hills are in many places too steep to work, and will not add much to the useful area of country. It is only fair to add that, should the new line be adopted, the above-named station would serve reasonably well the land in the Orangapuku Valley.

The old line runs so as to show off excellently the fine scenery of Lake Brunner; and when this and the bold and striking scenery in the Gorge of the Waimakariri is added to the already well-known and famous gorges of the Otira and Bealey, the company have a large asset in scenery, and surely the question ought to be well weighed before the finest and most attractive part of it is lightly thrown away.

I would respectfully suggest that the question be not decided until the new survey is finished, and the whole advantages and disadvantages of the two lines can be contrasted; and I would advocate this course to the extent of the Government paying half the cost of survey if the new line is rejected.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

T. W. BRUCE.

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